

NATO FORCES: A CREDIBLE MILITARY FORCE IN OUT OF AREA OPERATIONS?

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NATO FORCES: A CREDIBLE MILITARY FORCE IN OUT OF AREA OPERATIONS?

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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Question: To what extent, and under which conditions, have out-of-area deployments by NATO forces in theatres such as Afghanistan and Bosnia succeeded in fulfilling central mission objectives?

NATO forces have been participating in “out of area” and peace support operations outside of NATO member territory since the deployment of NATO forces to Bosnia-Herzegovina in December of 1995. NATO-authorized troop deployments to Kosovo, Macedonia and most recently to Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force have followed. These NATO interventions are related to, if not founded on, the precepts of “coercive diplomacy or forceful persuasion”¹ where the use of force is employed to achieve progress in negotiation between warring adversaries, to encourage or compel the end of conflict, to ensure that stabilization and security follow the cessation of conflict and to set the conditions for post-conflict state building. While the contributions of non-US NATO Forces to out of area peacekeeping operations are significant in the area of training of indigenous forces and host nation infrastructure and economic development, current indications are that most non-US

NATO forces in Afghanistan are not conducting any form of offensive combat operations except individual or small unit actions taken in extremely limited self-defense situations. Thus the burden of conducting effective operations to reduce or eliminate the threats posed to nation and people of Afghanistan posed by the Taliban and Al Qaida and to secure and stabilize Afghanistan and truly bring peace to the people and Nation of Afghanistan, falls almost exclusively to the US Military and a very limited number of non-US military forces.

This research project explores the NATO out-of-area operation in Bosnia to determine the scope, effectiveness and types of missions and operations conducted during that deployment. Next, I will examine NATO's conduct of operations in Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force to determine what operations, mission, tasks US and non-US NATO Forces have conducted to date in Afghanistan and compare, contrast and assess the effectiveness of US and non-US NATO forces' respective efforts in Afghanistan to date. Finally, the project explores the reasons why there has been a difference in the type of military operations conducted by the US and other NATO forces, determines the implications for the future military out of area operations conducted by NATO forces and make recommendations for future NATO out of area interventions.

NATO FORCES: A CREDIBLE MILITARY FORCE IN OUT OF AREA OPERATIONS?

The challenges experienced during the ongoing NATO intervention in Afghanistan and perhaps now being re-discovered in the fledgling NATO intervention in Libya may be predicated on the assessment that NATO is not currently capable of effectively conducting the interventions of today and in the future due to the incredible challenges inherent in “out of area” intervention operations. Regardless whether national and/or vital interests have been determined, whether political objectives and military strategies are synchronized and are in congruence, whether intervention strategies, methods and tactics are continuously evaluated and updated to meet current operational requirements, NATO may not be organized, prepared, equipped or capable of conducting effective military operations outside member territory. The principal theme of this paper is to evaluate the ability of NATO to conduct “out of area” operations by assessing NATO interventions in Bosnia and Afghanistan in order to determine if NATO was and most importantly, whether NATO is able to effectively conduct military operations outside the territory of its member states or if “the complexity and scope of current peace operations is characterized by the need for partnerships at virtually every level of engagement and in every operational environment...simply put, existing capabilities do not match the scale and complexity of peacekeeping needs today.(that) the demands of the past decade have exposed the limitations of past reforms and basic systems, structures and tools of an organization not designed for the size, tempo and tasks of today’s missions. Political strains are also showing. Divisions within the international community affect the ability of some missions to act effectively on the ground, and the attention of Member States is at times spread thin among competing

peace and security priorities. Each new operation is built voluntarily and from scratch on the assumption that adequate resources can be found and is run on individual budget, support and administrative lines. Peacekeeping in its current form requires more predictable, professional and adaptable capacities. It calls for a global system to match the global enterprise it has become.”² Given the continuing volatility of the post-Cold War world, the latent probabilities for continued conflict in Africa and the Middle East and the number, scope and strategic importance of current intervention opportunities such as Libya, Cote D’Ivoire, Syria or perhaps even Iran, the need for effective NATO “out of area” operations has never been greater.

Historical Context

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established April 4, 1949, in Washington, D.C., with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The original stated purpose of NATO as put forth in the treaty's preamble was to "safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy ... promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area," and "unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security." ³ NATO’s primary military task was the collective defense of the territory of the Parties to the Alliance and it performed two additional tasks of a predominately political nature: transatlantic cooperation and the guarantee of a certain level of collective security for its members.⁴

For the first fifty years of its existence, NATO remained nearly exclusively focused on, prepared and positioned to achieve its core stated purpose and accomplish

its primary missions and tasks in the “territory of its signatories in Western Europe and North America and the seas and airspace above and around them north of the Tropic of Cancer and as defined in Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT)”⁵. During the Cold War between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, “out of area” in the NATO context, was a term which referred to regions of the world not explicitly covered by the security guarantee contained in Article 5 of the NAT. Article 4 permitted members to “consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened and perhaps served as a “relatively marginal and legal political instrument”⁶ to initiate NATO member Nation consideration, discussion, elicitation and coordination to conduct actions outside the geographic areas prescribed in Article 6.

With the end of the Cold War, no longer facing a credible threat to its core and secondary raison d’etre and purpose, “NATO demonstrated a newfound sense of political purpose in the early 1990s, first by reaching out to its former adversaries in Central and Eastern Europe and then by adopting a collective security role, beginning with “out of area” operations in Bosnia and Kosovo”.⁷ began to gradually and cautiously explore the support and eventually the conduct of “out of area” operations. The increase in number of NATO member states, most of which were formerly members of the Soviet Union or the Warsaw Pact, has given NATO a new source of deployable military manpower from Nations whose national interests now in part are both protected by NATO and in the interests of those Nations to be value-added to NATO and most of all perhaps to NATO founding members such as the United States.

NATO created and adopted a new Strategic Concept at the Rome Summit in 1991 which “ in principle allowed member Nations to make greater use of the consultative provisions set out in Article 4 of the NATO treaty by specifying that any armed attack on the territory of the Allies, from whatever direction, would be covered by Articles 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty...however, Alliance security must also take account of the global context....Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature...arrangements exist within the Alliance for consultation among the Allies under Article 4...and where appropriate, coordination of their efforts including their responses to such risks”⁸. NATO began planning & indirect support to on-going “out of area” multi-national or United Nation-sanctioned operations with the deployment of multinational naval task forces by the US and West European nations in 1987 to protect oil tankers from possible attack during the latter stages of the Iran-Iraq War to NATO support for the US-led response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990⁹. These initial NATO intervention-like acts and operations reflect a growing utilization of NATO capabilities to protect or ensure the national interests of NATO member Nations , such as the economic interests of member states dependent on Arabian oil, other than the historical and predominate orientation on guaranteeing the physical security of NATO member national territory.

It is within this context and from this background that NATO commenced the conduct of “out of area” operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina starting in 1995, in Kosovo in 1999 and later in Afghanistan in 2003. Using a “structured, focused comparison”¹⁰ methodology, this paper seeks to examine the NATO interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan through the prism of a series of questions which are based on the

tenets of an approach to evaluating the feasibility, acceptability and suitability of military intervention and the uses of military power known as the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. United States Secretary of Defense Weinberger articulated these tenets on November 28th, 1984 at a speech about the uses of military power to the National Press Club in Washington, DC:

“...First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies...Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning, If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all...Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And, we should have and send the forces needed to do just that...Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed-their size, composition and disposition-must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary...Fifth, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress....Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.”¹¹

The tenets of this speech were almost certainly inspired by both personal and if not national lessons-learned from the Viet Nam conflict, a conflict which was fought for over ten years by the United States, and which arguably was fought, without adhering to a single tenet of Mr Weinberger's speech. The tenets of this speech later became

codified and commonly referred to as the “Powell Doctrine”, based on General Colin Powell’s, the US National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff pervasive use of these tenets to advise US Presidents and Administrations on the appropriate uses of U.S. Military forces and were apparently adhered to, chapter and verse, during the US intervention in Kuwait from 1990-91 during the conduct of Operation Desert Storm ¹². Using the precepts of the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, the United States and its Coalition Allies deployed over 500,000 troops to conduct military operations to end Saddam Hussein’s occupation of Kuwait and to protect vital US and other Nation interests in the oil-rich region, in such an effective manner that the intervention became known as the “100 Hour War”. For the goals of this research paper, the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine will provide the context to evaluate the NATO interventions in Bosnia and Afghanistan using the following questions:

1. How was the NATO intervention articulated in the vital interests of NATO, and its Coalition Allies?
2. What was the stated end-state outcome of the intervention as articulated at the outset?
3. How aligned or mis-aligned were political objectives and military strategy?
4. How did NATO intervention forces continually reassess and adjust to meet original mission objectives?

Given the current and forecasted complexities of the NATO intervention in Afghanistan, the tenuous, if not precarious or declining security environment inside that country and the dire consequences of a NATO failure in Afghanistan for the people of

Afghanistan, the region and for individual and collective security of NATO member Nations, it is perhaps useful to evaluate these three NATO interventions accepting in principle at least, the assertion that “these are difficult days for NATO... the alliance has been seeking to reinvent itself since the end of the Cold War, including by deploying forces outside of the North Atlantic area—most notably to the Balkans in the 1990s and Afghanistan in the 2000s... the recent Afghan operation, in particular, has strained relations among members, revealing and exacerbating differences in their respective perceptions of NATO’s role in stabilization and peace building missions. .. cracks are beginning to show in the alliance’s commitment and long-term health”¹³. The concept of NATO burden-sharing, often debated and examined by global security scholars such as Ivo Daalder, is also pertinent to this study, since “with U.S. forces stretched thin in Iraq and European states failing to invest enough to participate significantly in operations far away from home, NATO is struggling to fulfill even its current commitments. And while the alliance has increasingly recognized the necessity of operating far from Europe—or “out of area,” in NATO parlance—it has been limited by the requirement that its member states be North American or European. NATO leaders are expected to address this problem at a summit in Riga, Latvia, in November. ..If the point of the alliance is no longer territorial defense but bringing together countries with similar values and interests to combat global problems, then NATO no longer needs to have an exclusively transatlantic character. Other democratic countries share NATO's values and many common interests -- including Australia, Brazil, Japan, India, New Zealand, South Africa, and South Korea -- and all of them can greatly contribute to

NATO's efforts by providing additional military forces or logistical support to respond to global threats and needs”¹⁴

Whether NATO should continue to remain serving as a collective security organization is not the subject of this paper, however the effectiveness of NATO in conducting “out of area” operations is indeed fundamental to the objectives of this paper as well as to the current and future conduct of NATO interventions.

NATO Intervention in Bosnia

After years of sustained, horrific and at times genocidal ethnic conflict inside Bosnia & Herzegovina between a number of warring factions which included Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, Bosniacs as well intrastate war between Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia and in the face of over five years of ineffective United Nations peacekeeping intervention by the United Nations Protection Force(UNPROFOR) inside of Bosnia & Herzegovina, “the General Framework Agreement for Peace(GFAP), negotiated in Dayton, Ohio, was signed in Paris on December 14th 1995 by representatives from the Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina, The Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Paris”.¹⁵ The GFAP was preceded by and perhaps predicated upon a NATO airstrike intervention in Bosnia in the late summer of 1995 during which xxx sorties were flown predominantly against Serb and Bosnian Serb targets located in Bosnia.

The Dayton Peace Agreement and the UN Security Council Resolution 1031 of December 16, 1995, resulted in 60,000 soldiers from all NATO states and 17 non-NATO states being moved into Bosnia in the framework of the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR). On December 16, the North Atlantic Council launched the largest military

operation ever undertaken by the Alliance, Operation Joint Endeavor. Joint Endeavor was a NATO-led operation under the political direction and control of the NAC. IFOR had a unified command structure with overall military authority in the hands of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) . The operation started with the deployment of an Advance Enabling Force of 2500 troops in Bosnia and Croatia on 02 December 1995 that established the headquarters and communications and logistical facilities. Several UNPROFOR units already on the ground were transferred to IFOR, and on 20 December, all NATO and non-NATO forces participating in the operation came under the command and/or control of Commander, IFOR.

IFOR continued operations inside of Bosnia until it was replaced in November 1996 by a US-sponsored and NATO-approved IFOR follow-on force called the Stabilisation Force(SFOR).SFOR continued the NATO peacekeeping operation, with a “greater emphasis on stabilisation as opposed to pure implementation of the military aspects of the GFAP”¹⁶. President Clinton wrote in a letter to Congressional leaders that: “SFOR’s tasks (were) to deter or prevent a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace, to consolidate IFOR’s achievements, to promote a climate in which the civilian-led peace process can forward. Subject to this primary mission, SFOR will provide selective support, within its capabilities, to civilian organizations implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement.”¹⁷. On December 2, 2004, NATO formally concluded its Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina and handed over peace stabilization duties to a European Union force (EUFOR). The mission of the EU’s Operation *Althea* is to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton peace agreement and contribute to a secure environment and Bosnia’s efforts towards European

integration. The 7,000-strong operation constitutes the largest EU military mission to date. NATO retained a small headquarters presence in Sarajevo, with some U.S. forces, to assist with defense reforms, counterterrorism efforts, and the apprehension of wanted war crimes suspects, many of whom are believed to be hiding in or transiting through Bosnia.¹⁸

How was the NATO intervention articulated in the vital interests of NATO, and its
Coalition Allies?

The years of ethnic, genocidal strife taking place inside of Bosnia from 1992-1995 presented a clear and imminent threat to the social and economic security interests, if not the territorial sanctity of the NATO countries which bordered the States of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia due to the number and effects of refugees, the threat of spillover ethnic strife, increases in regional criminal and black market activity and a looming threat of interstate war between Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to the latent threats to Balkans regional stability and NATO member vital and national interests, there were also intrinsic threats to the vital interests of NATO and its Coalition Allies in that the “transatlantic dispute over how to stop the war in Bosnia culminated in a dispute over the responsibility to stop a war and the best means to do it (air power or ground troops) which ultimately threatened the ability of the community’s institutions to act, and the maintenance of the identity of the community which had constructed such a responsibility to Eastern Europe. It was this threat to the community more or less to the Cold War state where the Americans took the lead. ...the Allies found it necessary to act both because of their interests (such as their peacekeepers being taken hostage) but also because of the need to maintain the community.”¹⁹ Significantly, the GFAP and most importantly, the operational environment in Bosnia and the general actions of the warring parties in Bosnia, facilitated the conduct of a NATO peacekeeping intervention, since the conflict had largely culminated due to a collective weariness of fighting, lack of resources, the real or

perceived effect of recent NATO airstrikes and the strength of the NATO ground troop intervention.

Accordingly, the NATO intervention in Bosnia may be viewed as intrinsically vital to the survival of NATO as an organization as well as in the vital national interests of NATO members. The NATO intervention “prevented a new flare-up of hostilities, thereby enabling over 300,000 refugees to return home. Even if many of the political objectives of this mission could not be successfully achieved-with corruption, organized crime, and inadequate cooperation between ethnic groups still presenting a serious obstacle to full implementation of the Dayton agreement, ten years down the line-the overall security situation had improved markedly.”²⁰

What was the stated end-state outcome of the intervention as articulated at the outset?

Despite various, and at times, differing National goals and objectives either articulated or held closely, it is clear that NATO member Nations keenly desired an end to the conflict taking place inside of Bosnia and the institution of a political process among the warring factions to replace the methodology of war, violence and genocide to achieve factional goals and objectives. IFOR was originally given a one year mandate with the primary mission “to implement Annex 1A (Military Aspects) of the GFAP which included: causing and maintaining the cessation of hostilities; separating the armed forces of the Bosniac-Croat Entity (The Federation) and the Bosnian-Serb Entity (the Republika Srpska) by mid-January 1996; transferring areas between the two entities by mid-March; and finally, moving the Parties’ forces and heavy weapons into approved sites”²¹. And, thanks to IFOR’s early success, “a secure environment was established; IFOR’s very existence enabled the High Representative and other organizations to start

its work with regard to the implementation of the civilian aspects of the GFAP and to create conditions in which the return to normal life could begin in Bosnia & Herzegovina”²². The GFAP or Dayton Peace Accords as it more commonly became known as, reached its primary goal, “to stop a war that had already caused great human casualties and enormous material, that had displaced and left homeless nearly half of the population of the area and thus had left huge scars in the flesh of a multi-ethnic , multi-confessional and multicultural society...”²³ .

It is clear that the NATO intervention in Bosnia was indeed successful at achieving the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Accords mainly due to the adherence to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine precepts of overwhelming force, clear and defined military operational and tactical objectives, the presence of a gelling foundation of European NATO Nation national political support for and lack of definitive US National opposition to the intervention and most of all, the shadow of an defined, finite intervention timeline. Despite the success of the intervention in achieving largely military objectives however it is not as assured, that the potential and probability for the resumption of ethnic conflict in Bosnia has been completely mitigated or eliminated. Bosnia remains a country will retains the buried yet smoldering embers of ethnic tension and fear, widespread suspicion of post conflict unequal justice , unfair land, resource and economic distribution.

How aligned or mis-aligned were political objectives and military strategy?

By implementing the military aspects of the Dayton Agreement, IFOR contributed to the creation of a secure environment conducive to civil and political reconstruction. It also provided substantial support for civilian tasks within the limits of its mandate and

available resources by working closely with the Office of High Representative(OHR), the International Police Task Force(IPTF), the International Committee of the Red Cross(ICRC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees(UNHCR), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe(OSCE), the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and many others, including more than 400 NGOs active in the area. IFOR offered a range of support facilities to these organizations, such as emergency accommodation, medical treatment and evacuation, vehicle repair and recovery, as well as transport assistance, security information and advice, and other logistical support. IFOR was seen as a potent force and accomplishment of the military aspects of the Dayton Accords indicated success. The “secure environment that NATO was able to establish permitted furtherance of the important civil aspects of the Accords, NATO was clearly a respected and credible intervention force”²⁴ in comparison to the United Nations Protection Force’s (UNPROFOR’s) generally accepted reputation as a failed intervention force whose political and security objectives, strategies and methods were not in congruence, were not effective, did not stop the violence , genocide and conflict in Bosnia²⁵ . IFOR’s primary mission included monitoring compliance of the agreement on military matters in Bosnia such as disarmament and withdrawal of forces.²⁶ IFOR was granted the right to use force as necessary and to have freedom of movement and to have freedom of movement.²⁷

Annex 1A, Article VI:3 of the GFPA provided IFOR with the right to help create secure conditions for the conduct by others of other tasks associated with the peace settlement...to assist the UNCHR and other international organizations in their humanitarian missions...to observe and prevent interference with the movement of

civilian populations, refugees and displaced persons and to respond appropriately to deliberate violence to life and person. It should be pointed out that this right was not an obligatory one and thus the civilian implementation was from the beginning hampered by IFOR relative reluctance to use this power. There was a certain lack of political will in major world capitals because of existing fears for casualties among IFOR troops that left the High Representative without the tools and mechanisms for enforcing the peace.²⁸

While participating in Operation Joint Endeavor as a member of NATO's initial Advance Enabling Force in Sarajevo from December 1995 to January 1996 and as an "over the horizon" supporter of NATO Stabilization Force in 1997 and 1998, I observed and was able to measure the effects of several NATO member Nation fears of casualties among its Soldiers, most specifically during the conduct of initial operations to separate warring factions in Multinational Division- Southeast(MND-SE) in the cities of Sarajevo and Mostar in December 1995. While the individual Soldier and collective bravery of some NATO Nation's forces is not the issue nor at question, it was clear that many of the NATO forces conducting operations in MND-S were operating under national guidance to limit if not completely avoid casualties among its forces, guidance which had a significant and deleterious effect on the effectiveness, pervasiveness and speed at which those military forces were able to implement the military tasks assigned under the Dayton Accords. Delays in separating the warring factions due to military force casualty-avoidance or risk-averse strategies, tactics and methods significantly delayed the quelling of all warring faction violence which continued in Sarajevo until March of 1996, 3 months after NATO forces intervened in Bosnia²⁹.

How did NATO intervention forces continually reassess and adjust to meet original mission objectives?

An essential hallmark and capability of any competent military, government or organization is not just its ability to initiate an endeavor or operation but is also more importantly, regarding the sustainment of its participation in an endeavor as complex and comprehensive as an multi-national intervention, it's willingness and it's capability to challenge intervention original assumptions and understanding of the mission, the environment and its methods and to modify and adjust its plans, policies and procedures to meet changes , new developments and unforecasted factors. The early operations of IFOR and its successor Stabilization Force (SFOR) "suggested a restricted understanding of peace missions on the part of NATO and its member states....the narrowly military aspects of the Dayton Agreements...were accomplished relatively quickly and without major incident. However complaints were soon heard that other elements of the postwar effort in Bosnia were being neglected and that insufficient support for them was forthcoming from the NATO forces. Pursuing indicted war criminals and providing or supporting effective policing were two challenges most often mentioned in this context".³⁰ Despite the successful deployment of NATO forces in the region and the arrest of ethnic cleansing, stability and security in the Former Yugoslavia remains perilous while menaced by ethnic hatred, criminals and political uncertainty³¹.

The perspective and shortfalls described above regarding IFOR's inability to accomplish two relatively minor challenges regarding establishment of effective policing and the apprehension of indicted war criminals are indicative of a NATO failure to effectively adjust its methods, policies and efforts to meet overall mission objectives and

end-states. Based on my observations inside and “over the horizon”³² Bosnia from 1995-1998, the lack of effective policing within Bosnia negatively affected nearly all aspects of NATO and Bosnian efforts to re-establish peace, security, stability, law and order at all levels of the Bosnian society. The failure of IFOR to effectively apprehend indicted war criminals inside of Bosnia undermined the legitimacy of NATO’s overall efforts, sustained Bosniac perceptions of unattainable reckoning and justice for the victims of the genocidal violence and emboldened former warring factions to continue passive or active resistance to Dayton Peace Accords’ measures which contravened their criminal, ethnic or personal goals, objectives and endeavors.

Despite these significant failings, the NATO intervention in Bosnia did bring an end to genocidal conflict inside of Bosnia and gave the people of Bosnia the opportunity to resolve their differences through negotiation, accommodation and at least grudgingly refraining from committing acts of war and resuming the practice of wholesale violence to effect change. Thus, in the case of Bosnia, it was truly perhaps “only when an outside enforcer steps in to guarantee the terms do commitments to disarm and share political power become believable. Only then does cooperation become possible”³³. Though NATO’s intervention in Bosnia could have and should have been more comprehensive in scope and more far reaching in terms of long term objectives and effects, the intervention certainly brought about the absence of conflict, if not gave the promise and hope of peace to a people and a region.

NATO Intervention in Afghanistan:

The roots of the NATO intervention in Afghanistan are buried in history of conflict of the last 30 years of that country. Soon after the Russian intervention in December

1979, Afghanistan became a proxy battleground between the leading Nation of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union and the leading Nation of NATO and the Western World. Instead of engaging in direct confrontation with Soviet Union, the United States at times directly and most often indirectly supported with military equipment such as Stinger antiaircraft missiles and with funding to Russia's adversary, the Mujahedeen until the Soviet Forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1986. Following the departure of Russian forces from Afghanistan, tribal, ethnic and eventually, factional conflict consumed Afghanistan leading to the rise of the Taliban and in due time, a strategic and operational stalemate between the forces of the Taliban and the loose alliance of tribal groups called the Northern Alliance. Afghanistan eventually became the host for a variety of terrorist groups, to include Al Qaida, the group recognized as responsible for the planning, support and conduct of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. By early October 2001, United States Special Operations Forces and personnel from the Special Activities Division of the Central Intelligence Agency had infiltrated into Afghanistan, joined forces and efforts with Afghan paramilitary forces from the Northern Alliance and other Afghan groups already fighting the Taliban and with unprecedented speed and completeness, had defeated the Taliban Government and Taliban forces, and had liberated Kabul and most of Afghanistan from Taliban control by December 2001. Throughout 2002 and into the following year, United States' forces and some selected Coalition Forces conducted the majority of military operations to continue the pursuit and destruction of Al Qaida and Taliban leadership in southern and eastern Afghanistan while NATO established an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul to secure the capital region.

NATO has been responsible for leading the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since August of 2003. Currently there over 130,000 NATO Soldiers from 48 Nations³⁴ conducting operations across all of Afghanistan, yet most indications are that the Taliban and other insurgent forces in Afghanistan have continued to grow stronger, have become more prevalent and operate in more areas of Afghanistan with greater effect and apparent periodic impunity since NATO forces became responsible for securing Afghanistan and its people.

General Stanley McChrystal, commander of the ISAF from June 2009 to June 2010, recently stated that : “ NATO took the mission in Afghanistan at the request of the United States and most NATO nations came to Afghanistan with the expectation to conduct peacekeeping not counterinsurgency...NATO Nations’ electorates became used to the thought of no war”.³⁵ Canadian General Rick Hillier, who commanded NATO forces in Afghanistan from February to August 2004 and was later chief of staff of the Canadian Armed Forces from 2005 to 2008, wrote in his memoir **A Soldier First**, published in 2009, that NATO was an unmitigated disaster in Afghanistan. He recalled that when it formally accepted responsibility for Afghanistan in 2003, NATO had "no strategy, no clear articulation of what it wanted to achieve" and that its performance was "abysmal". Hillier said the situation "remains unchanged" after several years of NATO responsibility for Afghanistan and that NATO had "started down a road that destroyed much of its credibility and in the end eroded support for the mission in every nation in the alliance..."³⁶.

NATO-ISAF currently details four key priorities to perform its mission in Afghanistan: “to protect the population; neutralize insurgent networks; develop the Afghan National Security Force; and, promote effective governance and supporting socio-economic development”³⁷. The conduct of comprehensive strategy utilizing a variety of offensive military operations in addition to fostering and ensuring improvements in local, district, provincial and national governance and the Nation’s societal and economic conditions is clearly warranted in nearly all parts of Afghanistan today in order to achieve these key priorities in the face of an armed enemy which uses violence against Afghan National Security and Coalition Forces and directly or indirectly targets the people of Afghanistan³⁸. Indeed, NATO currently states that “ridding Afghanistan from insurgent activity is the prerequisite to the establishment of lasting and sustainable security, local governance and economic progress”³⁹. Offensive operations appear to be at least a necessary if not fundamental component of any ISAF campaign plan and strategy to achieve its mission.

Though the majority of comprehensive offensive operations in Afghanistan since 2003 have been conducted in the United States-led Regional Command East and more recently in the United States-led Regional Command South and the newly formed United States-led Regional Command Southwest, the Taliban, Taliban–affiliated/inspired/supported groups or even Afghan criminal groups have significantly increased the scope, breadth and type of its attacks and operations across Afghanistan, to include the German-led Regional Command North and the Italian-Led Regional Command West. Each of the Regional Commands possess major units and combat forces from various NATO Nations, yet out of 2,217 Coalition casualties sustained in

Afghanistan since 2003, over 1,376 have been Americans.⁴⁰ Non-US NATO Nation casualties range from a high of 349 United Kingdom Soldiers, 153 Canadian Soldiers and 52 French Soldiers killed to single digit casualty totals from the NATO Nations of Norway, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Portugal, Turkey and Belgium⁴¹.

The reasons why many NATO forces have not experienced the number of casualties that their American counterparts have sustained are not just a function of the number of forces present in Afghanistan, nor are they based solely on where non-US NATO units are located. Instead, the fundamental reason for a significantly disparate number of casualties is that many NATO forces have not engaged in combat operations to the same extent as their American counterparts. The reasons for this lack of fighting are perhaps as complex and varied as the individual Nations which have sent their forces to Afghanistan and perhaps stem from National directives to limit casualties and a "lack of capacity and experience"⁴² in conducting counterinsurgency operations rather than National, Unit or individual unwillingness to bear the costs of war in Afghanistan .

How was the NATO intervention articulated in the vital interests of NATO, and its Coalition Allies?

Following the September 2001 attacks on the United States, NATO acted under Article V of its founding treaty, which holds that an attack on any of its member states will be considered an attack against them all. When selected European members of NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, those Nations "almost certainly did not anticipate that, in doing so, they would find their armed forces engaged in a decade-long conflict in Afghanistan. The Article 5 declaration -- holding that Sept. 11 was an attack on NATO's collective security -- was

intended as a low-cost gesture of trans-Atlantic solidarity with the United States and the traumatized American people, rather than as an operational commitment to wage a protracted and frustrating conflict".⁴³

What was the stated end-state outcome of the intervention as articulated at the outset?

Following the United States' and selected Coalition Partners' intervention in Afghanistan in October of 2001 to capture or destroy Al Qaida, to overthrow the Taliban government and to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a source of international terrorism, NATO began its intervention in Afghanistan in December 2001 based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386 and the Bonn Agreement of 2001 which authorized "the deployment of an international force in and around Kabul to help stabilize the country and create the conditions for self-sustaining peace"⁴⁴.

The newly established ISAF was initially placed under the command of a British General and 18 countries contributed forces and assets. In April 2003, at the United States' request, the North Atlantic Council expanded NATO's support for ISAF and the first troops under Alliance command were deployed to Kabul in July. By mid- August 2003, NATO had assumed command and coordination of the ISAF from the individual European commands which had been authorized by the UN. Since 2003, NATO has "steadily expanded its role in Afghanistan...although originally conceived as a mission of stabilization, transition and reconstruction, NATO's expanding responsibilities, collided with a deteriorating security environment in 2005 and has increased the risks to Alliance members, the demand for more troops and the cost of creating order"⁴⁵. NATO

ISAF currently states that the purpose of its presence in Afghanistan is “to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a haven for terrorists and to help build security and contribute to a better future for the Afghan people”⁴⁶. The exponential growth in the scope of the goals and objectives of the NATO ISAF efforts from providing security in Kabul to building a better future for the people of Afghanistan indicates that the NATO intervention has become a foundation of state-building efforts for the contributing Nations, whether this mandate has been articulated or approved by NATO or its member States.

How aligned or mis-aligned were political objectives and military strategy?

According to General (Retired) Stanley McChrystal, all NATO Nations’ forces demonstrated laudable courage and commitment to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, had in fact “achieved many positive effects in Afghanistan and that NATO Nations and Forces’ resolve were far greater than he had been led to believe when he arrived to ISAF in June of 2009”⁴⁷. For General McChrystal, the reasons why many NATO forces may not conduct “effective, aggressive operations”⁴⁸ in support of counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan are: “one, NATO Nations came to Afghanistan at the request of the United States and ‘sold’ their participation in NATO collective efforts in Afghanistan to their national constituents as peacekeeping operations and not a counterinsurgency campaign; two, many NATO Nations do not know how to conduct counterinsurgency operations due to a lack of NATO doctrine on this subject and a wholesale lack of experience amongst non-US NATO Nations in conducting counterinsurgency operations, and three, some non-US NATO forces just ‘can’t or won’t conduct

counterinsurgency operations... that they don't know how to do it, they can't do it or they won't do it"⁴⁹.

General McChrystal's assessment of an strategic and operational level disconnect between NATO Nation goals and objectives for Afghanistan and their respective military strategies and guidance for supporting ISAF's effort is shared... "from the very start, NATO involvement was characterized by fundamental disagreements between the members over the interests and the nature of the operation. The Afghan mission (as with previous forays into peacekeeping) differs in three crucial aspects from the Cold War tasks performed by NATO in that: (1) it is discretionary; (2) it does not occur on member state territories; and (3) it involves low stakes for NATO members as compared to territorial defense. ...Distributional conflict within NATO is perhaps best illustrated by the presence of caveats that restrict the activities of difference alliance contingents in Afghanistan. These range from geographic caveats to restrictions placed on military personal with respect to the "offensive" use of force. As in earlier conflicts, such as Kosovo, these caveats have proven to be operationally problematic. In the words on one general, they not only increase the risk to every service member deployed in Afghanistan and bring increased risk to mission success, but are also a 'detriment to effective command and control, unity of effort and....command'⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, given the casualties suffered by the alliance members operating in more dangerous parts of the country, these caveats have regenerated vocal complaints about uneven burden sharing within NATO. The recrimination has extended beyond the government level to affect public opinion within individual alliance member states. Beyond the operational

challenges, caveats also reflect, profound differences among NATO countries about the appropriateness of use of forces.”⁵¹

The assessment of profound differences between NATO forces participating in operations in Afghanistan regarding geographic and operational caveats, restrictions regarding the use of force and specifically the limitations on the conduct of offensive actions as well as a diametrically opposed ability to countenance and tolerate friendly casualties was confirmed based my observations of non-US NATO forces in western Afghanistan from August 2009- February 2010. The overwhelming majority of NATO forces that I observed and worked with were conducting a form of peacekeeping operations with significant constraints and limitations on the use of force, the conduct of offensive operations and a clear mandate to limit if not avoid completely any casualties.

Without National political support for conducting combat operations in support of a NATO counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan, it becomes clear why many NATO forces typically refrain from combat other than limited self-defense actions, become casualty averse and limit the number and type of offensive or kinetic type operations their units conduct. Unit Commanders from many NATO Nations are under extraordinary pressure from their respective National military and civilian senior leaders to limit their efforts and activities in order to limit, if not prevent, unit casualties.

How did NATO intervention forces continually reassess and adjust to meet original mission objectives?

Without a doctrinal background in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations and lacking military units experienced in conducting the types of missions and tasks necessary, non-US NATO forces and their military and civilian leaders have struggled

with establishing the right policy, the right strategy and the right methods to participate effectively in counterinsurgency operations against an enemy well-versed and experienced in how to effectively fight large military formations in the difficult terrain of Afghanistan. The implications of a NATO force which does not possess the capabilities, capacity, and in the end, the willingness to conduct type of operations needed in support of the counterinsurgency campaign are tremendously dire and potentially doom any hope of NATO success in Afghanistan.

The reasons for the lack of NATO capability and capacity to be effective in Afghanistan are rooted in its original collective security mandate and in the respective National military requirements of its Member Nations. NATO was formed, chartered , organized , equipped, trained and resourced to conduct primarily conventional military operations against a large, organized and overt military force such as the Warsaw Pact, it was not created nor trained to necessarily fight an elusive, paramilitary or guerilla warfare opponent such as the Al Qaida or the Taliban. The lack of willingness of some NATO Nations to engage in offensive operations is also based on the costs of those operations, costs measured in terms of national resources such as money, equipment and Soldiers' lives.

Regardless of whether all NATO forces ever start to fight in Afghanistan, the immediate future of Afghanistan will be decided in the face of a dedicated and competent armed enemy who has chosen to employ violence and force to resist all NATO efforts to succeed in Afghanistan. Fighting in Afghanistan may not be the only means or method to succeed, but in war, fighting is eventually required to defeat the enemy.

Intervention Comparative Assessment:

The NATO interventions in Bosnia and later in Afghanistan were both “out of area” operations which were conducted in part to address NATO member national/collective security concerns, national objectives and/or national ideals, in part to end the human suffering and to stop conflict, warfare and wholesale violence against the people of two Nations and in part to set the conditions for resumption of civil society’s laws, order and stability. Whether the NATO interventions in Bosnia and Afghanistan are classified as peacekeeping, peace enforcement , “stabilization and reconstruction” ⁵²or just as peace operations is perhaps not as essential to the purposes of this paper as recognizing and then understanding the reasons why the members of a collective security organization like NATO would prove to have such widely different approaches to collective acts of intervention and most importantly , what are the implications of these two operations for future NATO interventions ?

National differences in the purpose, methods and end states of NATO interventions as well as divergent approaches to and the difficulties of planning, coordinating, executing and sustaining NATO interventions are inherent in the nature of these operations. “Part of the challenge stems from the changing nature and profound complexity of peace building itself. When former UN Security-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali first articulated the idea of peace building to the (United Nations) in 1992, he presented it as an international effort to create conditions for peace in countries that were emerging from civil wars. In the ensuing years, however, the complexities and demands of peace building became painfully apparent; in the cases where peace was fragile and incomplete, outside agencies were sometimes required to perform

peacemaking and peace enforcement functions. This translated into doctrinal confusion and multiplications of international actors involved in peace building, sometimes at cross-purposes.... The issue of 'sustainability' in peace building..... Sustainability, in this context, refers to the need for peace building approaches that are capable of reconciling the multiple, simultaneous and sometimes, contradictory demands of peace building, peacemaking, and peace-enforcement, and that are oriented towards the longer-term requirements for a durable peace rather than just short-term stabilization"⁵³.

This concept of sustainability and its implied tenets of a comprehensive, agile, encompassing and cohesive strategy, method and approach towards accomplishing and maintaining long term and enduring peace could be the foundation of a more effective NATO approach to planning, coordinating and executing interventions in the future as well as becoming more effective at synchronizing and integrating the efforts of non-NATO entities and organizations such as the UN, Medicines' Sans Frontiers, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and other governmental and non-governmental organizations focused on restoring or creating State capacities and capabilities⁵⁴. Assessment of the conduct of interventions in Bosnia and Afghanistan indicates that while NATO vital interests and end states were often identified and used as the source of legitimacy for intervention, there have been repeated, significant failures to match intervention military strategies, methods and tactics to achieving intervention goals, objectives and end-states. Instead, fear of casualties has appeared to drive and guide some NATO Nations' methods and tactics in Bosnia and Afghanistan, leading to inequitable "burden-sharing" in terms of casualties amongst intervention participants.

Limited NATO Nation carrying capacity to endure casualties may come from a variety of sources. Certainly the wages of fighting two World Wars on the European continent continues to affect the national ethos of many NATO nations regarding war, the use of force and the tolerance of military and civilian casualties. General McChrystal assesses that many NATO nations have a “cultural aversion to violence...and perhaps lack the professional courage ...”⁵⁵ to gain the political support necessary to authorize conduct of military operations which could cause casualties. Another carrying capacity factor could be the “low birth rate in Europe, well below replacement (capabilities). This means that many (European) sons are a family’s only child. This could affect attitudes towards casualties”.⁵⁶ The fear of casualties among European Nations is almost certainly rooted in the price paid in lives and treasure, by all the Nations whose territory and people endured the ravages of combat during World War II. Post War pacifism, though predominately associated with the German public⁵⁷, deeply pervades the societies and people of the European continent, which provides the preponderance of Nations who are members of NATO. Relevance, required capability and capacity as shaped or guided by the Weinberger-Powell doctrine tenets of vital national interests, defined intervention objectives, use of overwhelming force and national constituency support- not just politically or culturally determined norms and fiscal supportability - must become the foundation of any NATO effort to improve its intervention efforts, now and in the future. Given the dynamic, changing, expanding scope of changes sweeping through the Middle East and the latent opportunities for humanitarian and other interventions on the continent of Africa, NATO must prepare itself, its member Nations and its forces to become more mature, sophisticated and comprehensive in its

intervention assessment, decision and deployment determination processes. NATO must also become more united, better synchronized, more adaptive, flexible and self-learning during the conduct of its interventions. In the end, NATO must become sustainable, relevant and capable and not rely on the interventions of the past to craft and execute its future endeavors. The following table summarizes the observations and assessments presented in the paper regarding the conduct of NATO interventions in Bosnia & Afghanistan:

	<u>Bosnia</u>	<u>Afghanistan</u>
NATO Intervention Articulated in Member Vital Interests?	Eventually yes, NATO members cited regional stability and National physical security interests. Original intervention context & reason: humanitarian	No articulated shared interests nor accepted by all. NATO member assessment of the degree of vital national interests at stake varies among participants. Unstated/implicit vital national interest of preventing terrorism strikes pervades
Stated End-State Determined at Outset of Intervention?	Yes, if defined by cessation of hostilities; No, if all intervention objectives are considered	No, end-state for NATO intervention remains to be defined other than by measurements of length of intervention
Alignment of Political Objectives & Military Strategy?	Initially, yes, military strategy achieved political objectives; within 3 years of initial intervention, military strategy needed to be adjusted to meet continuing & new political objectives.	No, not as a NATO intervention force but alignment of National political objectives and National military strategy conducted by participating Nations
NATO Force mission reassessment & adjustment	Halting, limited NATO reassessment and adjustment process; periodic National reassessment by participating Nations tied to prevention of casualties	Yes, periodic assessment and Commander, ISAF directed/requested & NATO approved within caveats

In conclusion, the results of the research for this paper clearly indicate that while NATO out of area operations achieved initial and near term military objectives in Bosnia and Afghanistan, that long term success in these NATO interventions has yet to be determined, that NATO military strategies and methods were often not synchronized with nor achieved NATO and NATO Member long term political objectives and that significant improvement is needed in NATO pre-intervention brokering, consensus building and intervention ways, means and ends agreement. The limitations of this study are that only two cases, Bosnia & Afghanistan, were examined, as well as the definition of intervention success was subjectively determined by the author.

Findings & Recommendations:

- *Due to the challenges experienced during the intervention in Bosnia about the validity of long term intervention operations and the significant differences in National approaches to Afghanistan ranging from peacekeeping to counterinsurgency, NATO intervention goals, objectives and end-state must be defined to and accepted by participating NATO Nations' political leaders and respective constituencies before deploying forces to participate in the intervention.*
- *An assessment of NATO interventions in both Bosnia and Afghanistan clearly validate the requirement that NATO Intervention military strategies, methods & tactics are determined, understood and approved by all participating Nations and the collective membership of NATO before commitment of overt military forces. This area of the intervention spectrum is perhaps the greatest area of need for improvement. National differences in strategies, methods and tactics to meeting*

intervention requirements may exist if the intervention operations are conducted in national centric zones such as the Multinational Division Sectors in Bosnia, however when intervention operations and the effects of military operations are not limited to one sector as is being experienced in Afghanistan, agreement, synchronization and integration of NATO military effort, strategy , methods and tactics becomes fundamental to intervention success.

- *National differences in the type , scope and methods of the use of force in Bosnia and Afghanistan have been significant, periodically counterproductive and extremely frustrating to military leaders on the ground in intervention operations. Agreement on the type, scope and use of force must be achieved, agreed to and implemented by all participating Nations. A Joint written declaration or pledge regarding the use of force signed by all participating Nations should be published given the historically poor record of NATO Nation agreement on the use of force during participation in NATO interventions.*
- *To be able to effectively conduct operations to defeat an armed, paramilitary military force such as the Taliban conducting guerrilla warfare against NATO forces and the people of Afghanistan, conventional warfare strategies and methods have proven over history to be ineffective. NATO needs to develop a counterinsurgency doctrine and implement education and training in counterinsurgency planning, execution, support and sustainment⁵⁸*

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